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AUTHOR Swindells, Julia, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

This collection explores the range of uses of autobiography from the 19th century to the present and from Africa, the United States, Middle East, France, New Zealand, and Britain. The chapters draw on a number of approaches, including historical and literary methods. They are frequently about the retrieval and reclamation of previously hidden or misrepresented writings; anthropological and educational strategies, often using personal testimony as a means of questioning assumptions about the status quo; and demonstrations of autobiographical practice in writing workshops and performance art. "Introduction" (Julia Swindells) considers the tradition of autobiography and its uses. Two articles in chapter 2 explore theories of autobiography: "The Face of Autobiography" (Laura Marcus) and "Why Does an Author Who Apparently Draws So Much on Autobiography Seem Committed to 'Alienating" the Reader?" (Jane Unsworth). Chapter 3 has two papers on gender, militancy, and wartime: "'She Who Would Be Politically Free Herself Must Strike the Blow': Suffragette Autobiography and Suffragette Militancy" (Maroula Joannou) and "'Dear Laughing Motorbyke': Gender and Genre in Women's Letters from the Second World War" (Margaretta Jolly). Chapter 4 consists of two papers on making sense of the self: "A Strategy for Survival" (Clare Blake) and "Cultural Identities under Pressure" (David Whitley). The two parts of chapter 5 on constructing the self, inventing Africa are "Gender and Iconography in Auto/Biographies of Nelson and Winnie Mandela" (Cheryl-Ann Michael) and "Memory, History, and 'Faction' in Wole Soyinka's 'Ake' and 'Isara'" (Ato Quayson). The two parts of chapter 6 on autobiography, authenticity, and 19th-century ideas of race are as follows: "Sentimentality and the Slave Narrative" (Sarah Meer) and "Speculating Upon Human Feeling" (Nadia Valman). Chapter 7 has two chapters that focus on sisterhood and self-censorship in the 19th century: "Writing Herself: The Diary of Alice James" (Janet Bottoms) and "Gender Negotiations in Nineteenth-Century Women's Autobiographical Writing" (Pam Hirsch). Chapter 8 has two papers on the educative "I" in 19th-century women's

autobiographies: "Catharine Cappe of York (1822)" (Ruth Symes) and "'What I Earnestly Longed For...': Elizabeth Missing Sewell, Writing, Autobiography and Victorian Womanhood" (Brian Ridgers). Chapter 9 focuses on autobiography and educational change in "I Wanted to Nurse. Father Wanted Teachers." (Bobbie Wells, Peter Cunningham). The two parts of chapter 10 are on life histories, adult learning, and identity: "Writing about Learning" (Alistair Thomson) and "Motives, Mature Students, the Self, and Narrative" (Mary Lea, Linden West). The final three chapters are "Assumed Identities: Feminism, Autobiography, and Performance Art" (Claire MacDonald); "There Are stories (sic) and Stories: An Autobiography Workshop" (Gillie Bolton, Morag Styles); and "Conclusion: Autobiography and the Politics of 'The Personal'" (Julia Swindells). Appendixes include contributor notes and an index. (YLB)

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